

Most Inspiring Senior Leader

Winner

Jonny Jacobs, Starbucks



This category recognises those C-suite/senior executives/directors who have truly led from the front to banish stigma around mental wellbeing and who have gone above and beyond their day job

Jonny Jacobs, Starbucks' EMEA finance director, has a long history of driving wellbeing-focused change in the businesses he has worked for.

In 2017 he set up the grassroots mental health initiative PositiveMinds at global snack food manufacturer Pladis, with the partnership continuing to thrive today, reaching millions of people. He also co-leads the Mental Fitness in Business strategy, working in partnership with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS).

Taking what he has learned from Pladis, ICAS and as a trustee of the Mental Health Foundation and member of the Mental Health at Work CIC board, Jonny established the Starbucks Wellbeing Blend Network.

In the past year, Jonny took an informal group of diverse individuals to create Starbucks' first ever employee network globally that focuses on wellbeing. The Wellbeing Blend Network is Starbucks' holistic wellbeing programme, which is designed to support its employees and the communities the company serves with "an extra shot of wellness".

The judges highlighted the work Jonny put in setting up Wellbeing Blend has been "all volunteer, not day job" and praised him for his "amazing leadership, impact and reach"

Through the Wellbeing Blend Network,



Jonny has brought his experience of driving wellbeing-focused change to Starbucks, where his programme has global reach

Jonny has established a culture of storytelling at Starbucks, by sharing his own lived mental health experience and thereby creating a safe environment for others to feel able to do the same.

In a business that spans multiple countries, with offices and coffee shops all over the world, he has galvanised members to shift the focus of wellbeing from head office employees to the company's thousands of retail partners, reaching regions as far afield as Latin America.



Achievements

Jonny has won leadership approval to make sure than Starbucks offers its employees a comprehensive wellbeing package including making mental health a strategic priority, training for line managers and mental health champions, and a suite of comprehensive support tools from Headspace.

Leadership are fully engaged with the programme. The judges praised the “global reach” of the network, with its “stigma smashing and focus on hope”.

Other achievements of Jonny’s Wellbeing Blend Network included its partnering with the Mental Health Foundation to support Mental Health Awareness Week. This saw thousands of Starbucks baristas proudly wear the Green Ribbon badge to help smash the stigma surrounding mental health and bring the mental health awareness message to the UK population.

This reach was also reflected in Starbucks building a coalition of support, seeking to use its network of shops for public good and it the company signing up as national sponsor of the Baton of Hope suicide prevention walk, which passes through 12 major UK cities.

As evidence of the effectiveness of the Wellbeing Blend Network, internal surveys in 2022 showed that 80% of Starbucks staff said the company supports their wellbeing and provides a comprehensive range of resources. This represents a significant improvement on the results of a survey carried out pre-Covid.

Jonny’s openness, passion and unrelenting drive to ensure the resources, structure and environment are in place to allow every individual to maximise their own wellbeing is infectious, inspiring and, most importantly, makes a difference.

Without Jonny’s commitment, Starbucks would be not in this position where it can change the lives of so many people.

Recognising not only his work at Starbucks but also throughout his career in pioneering wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives, the judges concluded: “What an achievement and legacy.” ■



- ✦ He’s the finance director, so he brings a completely different perspective from a business point of view
- ✦ Amazing leadership, impact and reach. What an achievement and legacy
- ✦ All volunteer, not day job. Done at multiple employers. Created the global employee network. Lived experience. Storytelling. Global reach. Secured executive support. Internationally recognised (Gates Foundation). Stigma smashing. Emphasis on hope

Highly Commended

→ Andy McAleese,
Pacific Life Re

Shortlisted

→ Chris Tipping,
The DM Lab